

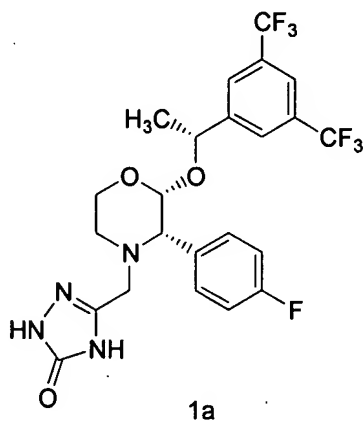
**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Please cancel Claims 1-27 without prejudice and insert new Claims 28-46 therefor. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

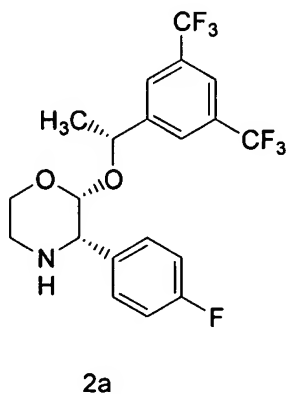
Claims 1-27. (Canceled)

28. (New) A process for preparing a compound of the formula 1a:



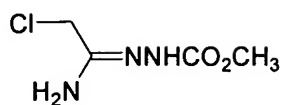
comprising:

reacting the hydrochloride salt of a compound of formula 2a:



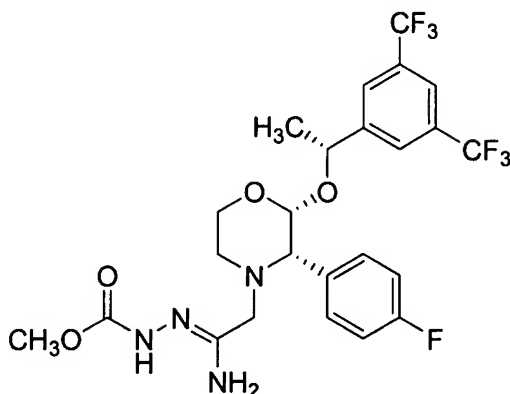
in the presence of an inorganic base,

with a compound of the formula 3:



3

to produce a compound of the formula 4a:



4a

and cyclizing the compound of formula 4a to give the compound of formula 1a.

29. (New) The process of Claim 28 wherein the compound of formula 2a is reacted with the compound of formula 3 in the presence of an inorganic base, toluene and a polar aprotic solvent.

30. (New) The process of Claim 29 wherein the polar aprotic solvent is selected from the group consisting of: dimethylformamide, dimethylsulfoxide, N-methylpyrrolidone, acetonitrile, N,N-dimethylacetamide and hexamethylphosphoramide.

31. (New) The process of Claim 30 wherein the polar aprotic solvent is dimethylformamide or dimethylsulfoxide

32. (New) The process of Claim 28 wherein the inorganic base is selected from the group consisting of: sodium carbonate, cesium carbonate, sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide and potassium carbonate.

33. (New) The process of Claim 32 wherein the inorganic base is potassium carbonate.

34. (New) The process of Claim 28 wherein the cyclization of the compound of formula 4a is conducted at a temperature of 140-150°C.

35. (New) The process of Claim 28 further comprising washing the compound of formula 4a prior to cyclization with an aqueous phase.

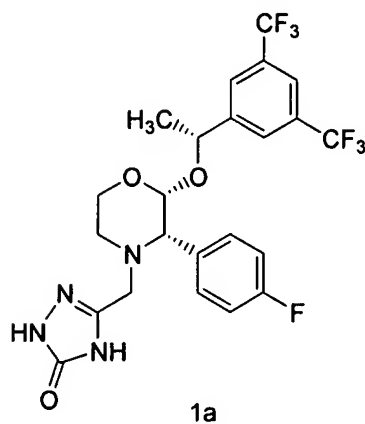
36. (New) The process of Claim 35 wherein the aqueous phase is comprised of an aqueous salt solution

37. (New) The process of Claim 36 wherein the aqueous salt solution contains at least one compound selected from the group consisting of: KCl, KHCO<sub>3</sub>, K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>, Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>, NaHCO<sub>3</sub> and NaCl.

38. (New) The process of Claim 37 wherein the aqueous salt solution contains KCl.

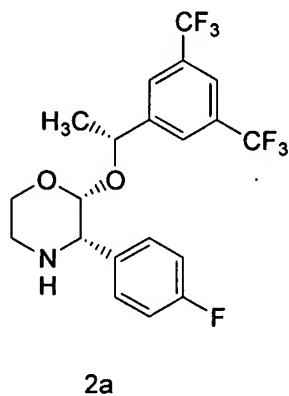
39. (New) The process of Claim 28 further comprising drying prior to cyclization.

40. (New) A process for preparing a compound of the formula 1a:



comprising:

reacting the hydrochloride salt of a compound of formula 2a:



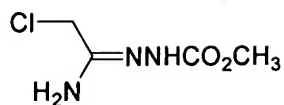
in the presence of:

an inorganic base which is selected from the group consisting of: sodium carbonate, cesium carbonate, sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide and potassium carbonate;

toluene; and

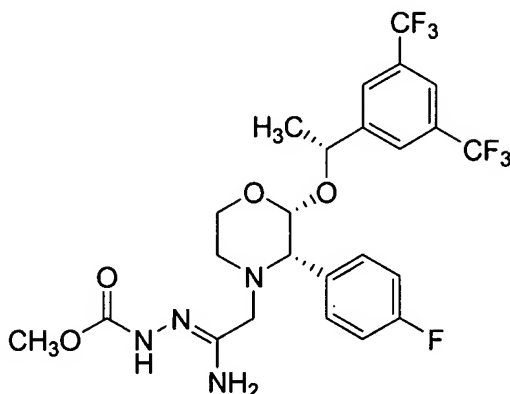
a solvent which is selected from the group consisting of: dimethylformamide, dimethylsulfoxide, N-methylpyrrolidone, acetonitrile, N,N-dimethylacetamide and hexamethylphosphoramide;

with a compound of the formula 3:



3

to produce a compound of the formula 4a:



4a

washing the compound of formula 4a with an aqueous phase;  
and cyclizing the compound of formula 4a at a temperature of 140-150°C to give the compound of formula 1a.

41. (New) The process of Claim 40 wherein the inorganic base is potassium carbonate.

42. (New) The process of Claim 40 wherein the solvent is dimethylformamide or dimethylsulfoxide

43. (New) The process of Claim 40 wherein the aqueous phase is comprised of an aqueous salt solution

44. (New) The process of Claim 43 wherein the aqueous salt solution contains at least one compound selected from the group consisting of: KCl, KHCO<sub>3</sub>, K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>, Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>, NaHCO<sub>3</sub> and NaCl.

45. (New) The process of Claim 44 wherein the aqueous salt solution contains KCl.

46. (New) The process of Claim 40 further comprising drying prior to cyclization.